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their less powerful neighbours. It is true that, in these latter days, when old prejudices are gradually passing away, some naturalists have cast them from their high estate to make room for other perhaps not more worthy occupants; but in the popular mind the eagle is still the "king of birds;" and when viewing his majestic form, his piercing eye, and strong and lofty flight, bearing in mind at the same time the terrific weapons with which he is armed, it is not easy to imagine any more expressive emblem of those qualities for which men were and are still raised above their fellows.

The rapacious birds are characterised especially by the form of the beak, the upper mandible being considerably longer than the lower and hooked at the end, forming a most formidable instrument for tearing the flesh from the bones of their prey. The legs and feet, too, are very powerful, and the strong sharp claws partaking of the form of the beak, are adapted for seizing their victim with a deadly grasp. They are remarkable also for their great length of wing and strong and rapid flight—qualities in which, as probably in courage, the eagle is excelled by many of his smaller relatives, the falcons.

The males of these birds are generally much smaller than the females, and often differ from them considerably in colouring; their plumage also changes greatly with age, the young birds often appearing in a dress very different from that which they are ultimately to wear, and as the mature plumage is generally attained by degrees, the birds sometimes exhibit such multifarious characters in the different phases of their existence, as to have given rise to the establishment of half-a-dozen species in place of one.

One of the handsomest of the smaller hawks is that of which our engraving (p. 297) contains four representations—the American sparrow-hawk (*Falco sparverius*). This elegant little bird inhabits almost every part of the United States, but is especially plentiful in the northern portions. The female is about eleven inches long, and twenty-three in expanse of wing; the male is about an inch and a half shorter, and measures two inches less from tip to tip. The head is of a bluish ash colour, with the crown reddish; round the head is a whitish border, in which are seven black spots; the back is reddish bay, barred with black; the under side of the body yellowish white streaked with brown; the quill feathers of the wings are black, spotted with white. The tail feathers are reddish bay, with a broad black band near the end, and beyond this a yellowish white tip; the two outer tail feathers are white. The beak is of a light blue colour, tipped with black; the cere and legs are yellow, and the claws blue-black. Such are the general colours of both sexes of this handsome bird, which differ nevertheless in several minor particulars which space forbids our pointing out.

The American sparrow-hawk builds its nest in a hollow tree; it chooses a hole pretty high up, where some large bough has been broken off. The female is said to lay four or five eggs, of a light brownish yellow colour spotted with a darker tint. Wilson, the American ornithologist, who devoted his life to the study of the birds of his adopted country, has left us a most animated account of this little hawk. He says: "It flies rather irregularly, occasionally suspending itself in the air, hovering over a particular spot for a minute or two, and then shooting off in another direction. It perches on the top of a dead tree or pole, in the middle of a field or meadow, and, as it alights, shuts its long wings so suddenly, that they seem instantly to disappear; it sits here in an almost perpendicular position, sometimes for an hour at a time, frequently jerking its tail, and reconnoitring the ground below, in every direction, for mice, lizards, etc. It approaches the farm-house, particularly in the morning—skulking about the barn-yard for mice or young chickens. It frequently plunges into a thicket after small birds, as if by random; but always with a particular and generally with a fatal aim. One day I observed a bird of this species perched on the highest top of a poplar, on the skirts of the wood, and was in the act of raising my gun from my eye, when he swept down with the rapidity of an arrow into a thicket of briers, about thirty yards off, where I shot him dead, and on coming up, found a small field-sparrow quivering in his grasp. Both our aims had been taken at the same instant, and, unfortunately for him, both were fatal. It is particularly fond of watching along hedge rows and in orchards, where small birds usually resort. When grasshoppers are plenty,

they form a considerable part of his food." The remainder of its sustenance is made up of small snakes, lizards, mice, and birds, and it rarely eats anything that it has not killed for itself, and even this is occasionally rejected, if out of condition. In illustration of this, Wilson relates the following anecdote:—"One morning, a gentleman observed one of these hawks dart down on the ground and seize a mouse, which he carried to a fence-post, where, after examining it for some time, he left it, and, a little while after, pounced upon another mouse, which he instantly carried off to his nest, in the hollow of a tree hard by. The gentleman, anxious to know why the hawk had rejected the first mouse, went up to it, and found it to be almost covered with lice, and greatly emaciated! Here was not only delicacy of taste, but sound and prudent reasoning—If I carry this to my nest, thought he, it will fill it with vermin, and hardly be worth eating." The voracity of this hawk may be imagined from the circumstance, also related by the great American ornithologist, that in the stomach of one of these birds, he found the greater part of the body of an American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), "including the unbroken feet and claws; though the robin actually measures within half an inch as long as the sparrow-hawk."

The blue jay (*Garrulus cristatus*), a very common bird throughout the United States, is one of the greatest enemies of the sparrow-hawk—at least as far as most voracious attacks of the tongue may be regarded as signs of enmity. Like all his congeners, he has the greatest facility in imitating sounds; and, when disposed for a little quiet fun, can mimic the notes of other birds with such exactness as to deceive the most practised ear. He appears to be particularly fond of teasing the sparrow-hawk with his garrulous nonsense, "imitating his cry wherever he sees him, and squealing out as if caught; this soon brings a number of his own tribe around him, who all join in the frolic, darting about the hawk, and feigning the cries of a bird sorely wounded, and already under the clutches of its devourer; while others lie concealed in bushes, ready to second the attack. But this ludicrous farce often terminates tragically. The hawk, singling out one of the most insolent and provoking, sweeps upon him in an unguarded moment, and offers him up a sacrifice to his hunger and resentment. In an instant the tune is changed; all their buffoonery vanishes, and loud and incessant screams proclaim their disaster."

A much smaller bird than the jay, however, is able singly to drive this depredator from his haunts, at least during the breeding season, when affection for his mate and young prompts him to exert all his powers and dare every danger to save them from the destroyer. This is the king-bird or tyrant-flycatcher (*Muscicapa tyrannus*), a bird of passage in the United States, whose dauntless courage makes even the eagle fly from his attacks.

### THE WALLACHIAN ROBBER.—III.

Poor Zdenku was filled with serious anxiety. He racked his brain to no purpose in the attempt to discover why the formidable woman was so severe upon him. Meanwhile, his wife had managed to get an inkling of what was in the wind. From the glances of Maruschka and Dschurdschu upon Wantscha, who was crouching down in the corner, as well as from the alarm betrayed by Wantscha's looks, she gathered more than was spoken. Perhaps she also, with womanly ingenuity, guessed what had taken place at the garden-gate. At all events delay seemed to her dangerous, for she immediately sprang upon her daughter like a wild cat, dragged her out of the corner, forced her down upon the stone floor, and exclaimed: "She is your slave, body and soul, mistress! Tie a stone about her neck and throw her into the Temes where it is deepest; fasten her to a post and whip her till she stands in a pool of blood; tie her hands behind her back and sell her to the Turks! Do what you please with her, only do not withdraw from us your protection and favour."

Wantscha, who had in the meantime a little recovered from her surprise, attempted to resist. But her efforts were all in vain. Her mother kept her down with hand and knee, and compelled her by blows to submit to her fate. Zdenku stared in blank astonishment at the strange scene, which was a new riddle to him, instead of

solution of the former one. But Maruschka smiled with malicious satisfaction, and after watching the woman's unmotherly behaviour for some time, at last said: "Let the girl alone, Czinka. And you, Wantscha, come to me; I will offer you a bit of good advice—mind you give it a wise hearing."

The ill-used girl arose, and, while she arranged her disordered hair and smoothed down her clothes, she looked in no humour to listen favourably to any advice. She shot malicious glances at Maruschka, and every now and then flashed scorn and indignation at Dschurdschu. But Maruschka took care not to be discomposed by her untoward looks and behaviour. With an apparently friendly tone, which was only redeemed from hypocrisy by the touch of scorn with which her soft words were seasoned, she said: "I think you are a good child to your father and mother. They both love you beyond measure. There is only one thing that lies nearer their heart than their own child, namely—what is quite reasonable—their own welfare. They would, perhaps, not hesitate to sacrifice their life and their property to save your life; but assuredly they will not lose all they have just to gratify your whim. Do you understand me, Wantscha? Are you aware that your father and mother are beggars, the moment I withdraw my protecting hand from their flocks, their threshing-floors, and their house? If not, let me tell you so now. They will, therefore, find some means of conquering your stubborn will; and even if they had not the power to do this, I am sure you are much too good a daughter to bring down a curse upon your father's house and plunge those to whom you owe your existence into the deepest misery. You would not exact such a sacrifice at their hands, even to save your life. You are too dutiful and too noble for that."

Wantscha burst into tears. Her spirit was broken. As soon as the powerful mistress declared herself a suitor in the name of Dschurdschu, the poor girl abandoned all idea of resistance. Maruschka could brook no refusal at any time, and her tyrannical disposition was now irritated by the keen sting of jealousy. Nobody knew better than Wantscha how to act on the spur of the moment. Hence, resigning herself to her fate, she said with repeated sobs: "I obey, mistress."

"You do well," said Maruschka, and turning to Zdenku, added: "Join the hands of this pair together. Your daughter consents to become the bride of my faithful servant."

Full of joy, the rough old Dschurdschu sprang towards the poor girl, who offered no opposition to his embraces. At last light broke in upon the sluggish peasant, her father. "Is that all?" muttered he. "I was wondering what would come of all your threats. It was hardly worth while to talk so ominously just for this. However, it is all one to me. You have got a good wife, old fellow, and a nice little property. Take her, and may Heaven bless you both!"

With these words he betrothed his daughter to an old man, whose only recommendation was his being a *protégé* of the overbearing female robber. Czinka laid her hands on the heads of the affianced pair, and said, as she thought of Petru's dangerous schemes, "That trouble also is now at an end; we shall be able to sleep in peace. God be praised for this!"

Maruschka and the happy bridegroom remained all night at Mlakaberg. The amazon was even gracious enough to spend a great part of the morning there, and at last sat down to a late breakfast which served as the betrothment feast, which was prolonged beyond all expectation. Her malicious exultation over Wantscha's hardly-

repressed tears gave an additional relish to the food, and the flask which her husband left behind also contributed to lengthen her stay. She did not move from her seat till she had completely drained every drop of the liquor. By that time the day was far advanced, and their departure, which was originally fixed for the morning, did not take place till the afternoon. The trees on the mountains were already stretching their broad shadows towards Turkey, when the poor lass at length found an opportunity of giving vent to her feelings with tears in quiet retirement, while her merciless tormentor and hated bridegroom were roaming through the wood.

Both the travellers stept on apace, looking anxiously around, and listening attentively to every sound, like sportsmen who in unfrequented wilds make war upon the animal creation. After they had gone a good distance, Maruschka stopped at a steep elevation, from which she looked down into a valley where a herd of wild boars were taking their midday repose on the marshy soil. It was not, however, the wild boars that attracted her attention. She had seen in the distance beyond, the shadow of a man moving among the trees. The man had disappeared amid the foliage, before she had time to distinguish who he was. After a time the form appeared again through an opening in the trees, and Dschurdschu, who observed it, could not help exclaiming, "It is Micklos! What can he want here?"

"We shall soon know," replied Maruschka, upon which she put two fingers in her mouth and gave a shrill whistle, which echoed far and wide. The man sprang with a sudden bound behind the trees before he ventured to look round. But when he had done so, he came slowly out from his concealment, waving his hat, and indicating by his friendly greeting that he recognised his leader's wife. He was a Hungarian by descent, named Nicholas, which the old Wallachian corrupted into Micklos.

Maruschka beckoned him to come over to her. He assented, and immediately disappeared for the purpose, but did not take the shortest way. Probably he thought it advisable to avoid the armed cavaliers, and the furious wild sow with her numerous tribe of young ones. In this uncultivated region the wild boar still retains its original fierceness, though in Germany its nature is so far softened that a single shot is sufficient to put a whole herd to flight. Micklos came cautiously on, but all the more safely. "Where have you come from?" asked Maruschka, "and where are you going to?" "To our chief," replied Micklos. "There is likely to be a capture. The imperialists started very early this morning on a hunting expedition upon the mountain. One of them has missed his way. They are blowing the horn and calling out for him like mad ones. He must be a good prize, otherwise they would not make so much noise about him."

"By the time you get up to where he is, they will have found him long ago," said Maruschka.

Micklos put his finger to his nose, and said: "Yes, if they know what I know. They are looking for him up there, but he is on the other side. I saw him fire down in the ravine. I stood on the top of the mountain and listened on both sides, while they could not hear anything. The man has fired at least six times, and each time further away from the right path."

Maruschka winked with a smile of satisfaction. "You must be right," said she, "and I will accompany you to hunt the huntsman."

## MILITARY WATCH-TOWERS IN THE CRIMEA.

BOTH the climate and the soil of the Crimea are remarkably varied—so much so, indeed, that a description which might be perfectly true of one part, would require to be directly reversed in order to become applicable to another. The fact is, the peninsula consists of two distinct portions, which are separated from each other by the river Salghir flowing from west to east. The northern portion is almost wholly composed of extensive plains, which, though bare of trees, are not deficient in rich pasture, except where marshes and salt-lakes are found. Some of these salt-lakes, which are very numerous towards the sea-coast, are fifteen or twenty miles round. Throughout the northern part of the Crimea the climate is de-

cidedly unhealthy, being oppressively hot in summer, and bitterly cold, as well as damp, in winter.

On the contrary, in the south—particularly in the valleys and on the mountain slopes—a delicious mild temperature prevails, and fruits of all kinds are produced in rich abundance. Among the productions of this region may be mentioned, corn, hemp, flax, tobacco, olives, vines, mulberries, pomegranates, figs, and oranges. Dr. Clarke gives the following description of a district in the south of the Crimea:—"If there exist a terrestrial paradise, it is to be found in the district intervening between Kutchukoy and Sudak, on the south coast of the Crimea. Protected by encircling alps